

(15)
A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D to the
S O C I E T I E S

F O R

Reformation of Manners,

I N T H E

Cities of *London and Westminster,*
Nov. 15. 1697.

By J O H N S H O W E R.

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L O N D O N :

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ISAIAH LIX 4.
None calleth for Justice.

TIS certain, that the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion are supposed, confirmed, and enforced by the Christian. The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, teacheth and obligeth us, to live soberly and righteously, as well as Godly. But how astonishing is the Kindness and Condescension? that God has shown such regard to those parts of Morality, which relate to the Good of Mankind, as to prefer them before his own Worship? That the Duties of the Law of Nature, are to take place of those of positive Institution; That he had rather we should express our Love to one another, and by Charity and Mercy do good in the World, than be honoured himself by Sacrifice, when that cannot be without Prejudice to our Neighbour. It must therefore be a very mistaken Notion of Religion, to imagine that any can be a very good Christian, that is not a very good Man. For Religion is not designed only for the Happiness of particular Souls in another Life, but for the Welfare of Mankind, as united in Societies in this World. And for that purpose God hath appointed Magistrates as his Ordinance, and required our Obedience for Conscience sake. He hath commanded us to pray for Kings, and all in Authority under them, and to assist them to our utmost, that they may not bear the Sword in vain. We are to rise up for them against the Evildoers, and stand up for them against the Workers of Iniquity. We are to forward and promote the Administration of *Justice*, and even to *call for it*, where that is needful, and may serve a publick Good.

Psal. cxvi. 9.

THE Neglect of this, and the general Indifferency and Remisness of private Persons, as to the Execution of Justice, is here complained of, as one of those things that made the *Jews* in danger of publick Judgments. For when National

Calamity is here threatned, this is assigned as one of those things that procured it, That *there was none called for Justice*, i. e. very Few amongst them did concern themselves, as private Persons, to have Publick Justice duely administred. And 'tis further added, or *pleadeth for Truth*; or, as some render the Words, *Judgeth truly*. That is, Private Persons, are careless and indifferent as to all such Matters; and Publick Magistrates, are negligent and faulty as to what belongs to them.

'TIS the former Expression, *None calls for Justice*, that I am now to consider, with respect to *Private Persons*: For, thanks be to God, there are Faithful Magistrates in and about the City, who are ready to do their Duty in the Administration of Justice, if Private Persons will but do theirs in calling for it.

MY Design from this Passage, is, *First*, To manifest that this is the Duty of Private Persons, which will at once vindicate your worthy Undertaking, and encourage you to proceed, and perswade others to joyn with you. *Secondly*, To consider some of the Objections, that may dishearten others from doing so, and weaken your own Hands. *Thirdly*, I shall take the Liberty to advise some things, that may help to attain your great End, the Reformation of Manners, and may render your Endeavours herein accepted with God, and all good Men. And, *Lastly*, From several Considerations, I shall endeavour to stir you up to call for Justice.

I. F O R the Proof, That this is a *Duty* in Private Persons, we need but Consider how it is here complained of in the *Jews*, as one of those Iniquities which separated between God and them, and caused him to hide his Face, that he would not hear their Prayers, *Ver. 2*. It is joyned with Lying and Cheating, with Violence and Murther, and other Abominations, that few or none had the Zeal and Courage, the Honesty and Integrity, to excite and assist the Magistrate in the Administration of Justice, whereby the Honour of God might be asserted, and the Authority of his Laws maintained, by the Punishment of Transgressors. To make you the more sensible that this is part of your Duty, I shall bespeak you. *First*, As

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Men, and Members of a publick Society, and so argue from the Principles of Natural Religion. *Secondly*, As *Christians*, who acknowledge the Holy Scriptures, and profess to own Revealed Religion. And, *Thirdly*, Considered as in a private Capacity, with reference to your own Families and Relations; where I shall manifest it to be, not only your Duty, but your Interest, to be concerned for the Administration of Justice.

I. AS MEN. Our general Obligations to Mankind, as we are Men, are more antient, and more indispensable, than any particular ones that can be superadded; so that by the Law of Nature we are bound to do good to all Men, as we have Opportunity, and to promote the Good of the Place where we live, and of the Community whereof we are Members. From a Principle of Love to the Society and to our selves also: for I my self and mine shall be involved in the Common Ruine. This is so Evident, that many an honest Heathen would have condemned him as unworthy the Name of a Man, who should prefer his Estate, his Reputation, or Life, before the Common Good. Now when the Laws of God, and the Land, have provided for the Punishment of such Offences as manifestly tend to the Ruine of the Society, whereof I am a Member, it must needs be my Duty, by the Law of Nature, to do what I can to prevent it. For if such and such Laws are for the Publick Good, and the Peace and Happiness of a Nation is promoted by observing them; and the Transgressors of such Laws be not punished, the Laws themselves are insignificant, and the publick Mischiefs, they were designed to prevent, cannot be kept off, for want of Execution.

EVERY one reckons by the Light of Nature, it is his Duty to assist his Neighbour, as a *Witness* or otherwise, that Right may take place, and Justice be administred in *Civil Matters*; that in case his Person be assaulted, or his Goods stolen, or what is his just Due be detained, &c. he may have the Satisfaction of the Law; There is the same, or greater Reason, in *Criminal Matters*, where the Punishment of the Offence is for the Honour of GOD, and for the Publick Good; and where a Reparation can no otherwise be made, but by the
Suffering

Suffering of the Offender, which in Matters of Property may be done by the Payment of so much Money.

AND how can an honest Magistrate, for want of Legal Conviction, punish the Guilty, if he never so much desire it? Let him be never so well qualified for his Office, and resolv'd to be faithful, yet if none will complain of the Breach of the Laws, and give him an Account by whom they are broken, and bear Witness in order to Legal Conviction, what can he do as a Terror to evil Doers? It will signifie little to have never so many good Laws, or good Magistrates: For Offenders will be as no Offenders, if there be none to witness against them: And the wisest and best Laws will be as none if they be not executed. And how can they be put in Execution by the Magistrate, if there be none to acquaint him by whom they are transgress'd, *i. e.* if none will *call for Justice*? In many cases, where the Number, Interest, and Character of the Offenders is considerable, a Magistrate may not have the Courage to do it, if he had the Opportunity, without the Countenance and Encouragement of other Men. And yet most usually, the Punishment of one Great Criminal might do more good, than of twenty meaner ones, as his Example and Influence did more hurt. This must needs hearten and encourage a good Magistrate to do his Duty, when, besides the Authority of his Office, and the Power of the Law, and his own particular Inclination, he is back'd and assisted by his Fellow Citizens: For hereby his Reputation will be the better secured, if he be faithful: In all Conversations and publick Meetings, there will be some of his Neighbours and Acquaintance, ready to abet his Cause, if he should be reflected on. And this will facilitate the Administration of Justice by succeeding Magistrates: And if any of you be hereafter call'd to serve your Country in a publick Station, what you do now in a private Capacity will enable you to do more Good hereafter in a publick one.

AS to Treasons, and Murders, and Thefts, Men do not reckon themselves at liberty to be *Neuters*, but these lesser Crimes make way for greater. And it is the Interest of any Govern-

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Government, and even of the Supream Magistrate himself; that ill Manners be corrected, and lesser Criminals punished; because it is by the Commission of lesser Crimes, that Men are prepared and hardened to venture upon greater. If the Laws, that threaten only Correction, Imprisonment, or a Fine, be neglected and despised; such as threaten Death, will in time have little Power: For he that will Swear and Curse, and be Drunk, and commit Adultery, and matters not the Hazard of his Health and Life, by a Course of Debauchery, will in a little time be hardened, so as to despise Death by the Sword of Justice. 'Tis therefore the Interest of any Government, to have ill Manners corrected, as a proper Means to prevent greater Crimes, where the Punishment is Capital.

IT ought likewise to be considered, that there is the same Contempt of Authority, if not greater, in transgressing those Laws, to which lesser Punishments are annexed, as where the Offender must *die* for it; the Difference of the Punishment, is not because there is less Contempt of the Law, and of the Law-giver, in the one case, than in the other; but because the evil Consequences are not the same: For the Voluntary allowed Neglect or Breach of any part of the Law, renders us guilty of the Violation of the whole, which was enacted by the same Authority. You must therefore remember, that tho' such Instances of Immorality, as you endeavour to punish, have not such an immediate Tendency, as Murder and Treason, to bring publick Confusion and Ruine; yet not only doth the one prepare for the other, but there is as manifest a Contempt of Divine and Humane Authority in these, as in the most Capital Offences.

BUT whether the Crimes be greater or smaller, the Ends of Punishment are such as cannot be attain'd, without the Assistance of private Persons, that the Laws made for the common Good be put in Execution.

THE Three great Ends of Punishment, are either, *First*, The Amendment of the particular guilty Person. *Secondly*, The making Others better, or preventing the like Sin in Others by the Warning given. *Or, Thirdly*, The Publick Security,

riety, promoted, by upholding the Honour of the Law, and vindicating the Authority of the Law-giver.

I. ONE End of Punishment, annexed to good and righteous Laws, is the Amendment of the guilty Person. Tho' Punishment alone will not teach him how to amend his Life; it may convince him that it needs to be reformed. He knows by what he suffers, that he hath not done as he should, and so may next consider how to do better, and resolve upon it. Many Men, by their *Calamities* in the World, by Sickneſs, and Poverty, and Shame, and the like, have been brought to consider their evil Ways, and, we hope, to amend them. Much more may we hope it, when the Suffering is the immediate direct Punishment, inflicted by the Laws of the Country for such a Crime. In that case, the Offender cannot turn his Eyes from the Occasion and Cause of his Suffering, or impute it to any thing else, as Men commonly do in other cases. For Instance, If a common Swearer be punished in his Purſe, or a lewd Person sent to the House of Correction; they cannot impute their Sufferings to any other Cause, than to the Faults for which they have been punished. And who knows, but that God, who delights not in the Death of Sinners, may give them Repentance, and their present Sufferings help to save them from Eternal ones? There have doubtless been many, who have sinned themselves within a Step of Hell, who have run into the vilest Debaucheries, and so to the very Brink of Ruine, that the very Flames of the bottomless Pit have even singed their Garments, and taken hold of the Hair of their Heads; who have yet been plucked as Fire brands out of the Burning, and have unfeignedly repented, and turned to God even in *Newgate*. Concerning divers such, we may hope, that tho' they fell under the Sword of the Civil Magistrate; yet by Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, they escaped Eternal Condemnation. And there might be more Instances of this kind, were there more care taken to assist condemned Prisoners before their Execution; our Charity in preparing them for another World, might be more successful, than usually it is upon Persons on a sick Bed.

BUT while I mention Charity to the Souls of Condemn'd Malefactors, I am perswaded there would be fewer such, if better Provision were made of *Work* and *Work-houses* for the Poor: Because Idleness and Poverty are the great Temptations to many of those Vices that fill the Prisons and Houses of Correction. There is more hope however, where the Punishment is short of Death, and the guilty Person it may be comes from a good Family, and had Religious Parents, and hath but lately cast off the Fetters of his Education, when 'tis not long that he hath been taken in the snare of the Devil, there is the more hope that such a one may be brought to consider himself, by such lesser Punishment, and so reform.

2. **ANOTHER** End of Punishment, is to warn others not to transgress in the like kind. And so it is rather an Act of Mercy, than Revenge; the End of it not being so much to retaliate the Evil on the Offender, as to do good to Others, and to keep them from the like Offences. *Smite a Scornor,* says the Wise Man, one that is an obstinate and insolent Offender, *and the Simple will beware.* Such as were like to sin by Inadvertency or ill Example, will take warning. *When the Scorners are Punished, the Simple are made Wise.* If one Sinner destroy much good, if one root of Bitterness may defile many; the Impunity of Criminals upon this account must needs be a great Mischief, as likely to spread the Infection through the whole Neighbourhood, Street, and City: And so 'tis every Mans concern, to have his Neighbours Child or Servant Punished for such Faults, from which he would preserve his own: And I need not tell you how much greater Influence bad Examples have, than good ones; you know that *Health* is not communicated, as *Diseases* are.

3. **PUNISHMENT** is an Act of Government, and hath relation to the Law; and so one End of it is to preserve the Authority of the Laws, and the Honour of the Magistrate, who is concerned for the Publick Good. * The reason, here, of Punishment

* See the Bishop of Worcester's Discourse of the Suffragans of Christ. Chap. 1. Gratia de Satisf. Cap. 2. ment,

ment, is not so much because a Law is broken, as because, if it be not punished, the Authority of the Law, and Law-giver, can never be upheld; and that is necessary, or the Community can never be preserv'd. And where the Offence to be punished, is against GOD and the Publick Laws; the Punishment is due to the Honour of GOD, and to the Common Good; and 'tis not in a Private Mans Power to forgive the Injury to the Publick, as he may do a pecuniary Debt that is owing to himself. *Vengeance*, says God, *is mine*; i. e. the inflicting of Punishment belongs to me. In him all manner of Right is primarily and originally lodged, as the great Lord and Proprietor of all. And every Injury and Injustice to another, either private, or publick, redounds upon Him as the Governour of the World. The decision of Right and Wrong, the distribution of Rewards and Punishments, appertains to him. *Vengeance*, as taken for the inflicting of Punishment, is his undoubted Prerogative, his unalienable Right: It belongs to him, and to those only whom he appoints to be *his Ministers to execute WRATH on such as do evil*. And we are not only to suppose the reason of this to be the Danger that may accrue to Society by the Impunity of Crimes, but because of the Dishonour and Affront that is offer'd to GOD, as the Governour of the World. He assumes Anger, Wrath, and Jealousie, to show he minds his own Glory, and will not bear Contempt; but avenge it. And to make Transgressors suffer, is for the Reparation of God's injur'd Honour, as well as for the Happiness of Society. It cannot therefore unbecome a good Man to call for *Justice*, it being his Duty on all these accounts to further and promote it.

THESE things will concern us as we are Men, under the Obligation of the Law of Nature.

2. LET me bespeak you, as you are *Christians*, and profess to own Revealed Religion, and the Authority of the Holy Scriptures. 'Tis not the duty of Magistrates and Ministers only, but of all the Followers of Christ, to be the Salt of the Earth, and the Lights of the World, in their

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their several places. Every Member is bound to promote the welfare of the whole Body, according to his Capacity. Every Christian must imitate his Master, who went about doing good. He is created, and redeemed, and sanctified, for it, as the Tree is made for the Fruit. Many devout Persons may think, if they were Rich enough to live without bodily Labour, and could spend all their time in Meditation, and Prayer, and hearing Sermons, &c. That this were the happiest Life in the World. The *Popish Nuns* and *Fryars* are under this mistake. But no Man is made for himself alone, we are Members of Society: We must do good to Others, and in doing so, we take Care of our own Salvation. Our Lord has taught us to pray, that the Name of God may be Sanctified, and shall we silently suffer it to be profaned? And his Kingdom come, and shall we do nothing that it may take place? And his Will be done on Earth, as in Heaven; without endeavouring this, we contradict our own Prayers. And when we desire the Will of God may be done, we mean it by Others, as well as our selves. And is it not the Will of God, that such Offences should be Punished? We beg Forgiveness of our own Sins, and the Sins of the Nation; Can we do it uprightly, and not endeavour Reformation? We may not suffer Sin upon Others, any more than allow it in our selves. The Scripture Examples, of *Zerubbabel*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, &c. may be urged to this purpose, as you have heard in some former Sermons, and I hope with very good Effect.

BUT let me here reason with you a little. Is it fit for *Christians* to be concerned, that Justice be done between Man and Man, as to their Lives, Estates, and Civil Rights; and shall we be more indifferent as to those Laws, where the Honour of GOD, and of our Blessed Redeemer, are more immediately concerned? If a notorious Cheat or Thief be discovered and taken, what general Rejoycing is there in the City! What Crowds will attend him to the Justice of Peace, to the Prison, to the Sessi-

ons-House, to the Pillory! Is it only, because your selves may one time or other be injured by such a Crime, or have been so? Doubtless, in Criminal Cases, there is more reason to assist, and more reason to rejoyce, as these Offenders are the Pests of Humane Society; and as their Crimes do carry an open Affront to Heaven. Is the cheating of you of a little Money so great a matter, the defrauding you in a Bill of Exchange, or a Bank Note, so very considerable, that every one is ready to assist to have such a Fellow punished? And is there not more reason in the other Case? Is the value of Ten or Twenty Pounds more to be regarded, than the Vertue, Honour, Safety, Health, Life, and Soul, of your Relations and Neighbours, which may be corrupted and destroyed by unpunished Vice, and Examples of Debauchery?

YOU know, you are not to intice and tempt Others to Sin; but are you not likewise to prevent others from being tempted? You may not lay a stumbling block in anothers way, to make him fall; but if you see him ready to cast himself down a Precipice, will you do nothing to prevent it? *Nehemiah* charges the Rulers for breaking the Sabbath, because they did not restrain others from bearing Burthens. How dear did it cost *Ely*, and his House, that, when his Sons made themselves vile, he restrained them not! Tho' *Pilate* spake to the Jews on the behalf of Christ as Innocent; yet is he charged with his Murther, for not doing all that he could to hinder it. We may many ways partake of other Mens Sins, and this doubtless is one, If we do not what we may and ought to prevent them. In which Case we likewise share in all the ill Consequences of their Iniquity, in all the Mischiefs that follow upon the City and Nation, by such Impunity.

Let me express this in the better words of
 * *Serm. 1. ad Magistratum.* * *Bishop Sander son*, You countenance, says
 29 *Job. 14.* he, the Disorders, that by Justice may be
 suppressed; You disarm Innocency, that
 Justice would protect; You banish Peace, which by Ju-
 stice

Justice is maintained; You are Traytors to the King and his Throne, which by Justice is established; and you pull down on the City and the Nation the publick Plagues and Judgments of God, which the Execution of Justice would avert. Is it not then your duty, as Christians, to promote and forward the Execution of Justice, when thereby you contribute to suppress Disorders, to protect Innocency, to maintain Peace, to secure the King and State, and to turn away publick Judgments from the Land?

SIR S, We are all Christians, the Duty is common to us all, the Obligation is equal. 'Tis what we are all concerned in, and agree in; because by our *Baptism* we are all engaged to fight under the Banner of Christ, in a constant Warfare against the Devil and his Angels. And 'tis observable, that when our Saviour was charged as a Confederate with Satan in working Miracles, he tells us, (and it is repeated by three Evangelists) that he was so far from that, that he looked upon that Man for his Enemy, who would not serve him in opposition to the Devils Kingdom and Interest. *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad,* Matth. 12. 30. Christ hath his Kingdom to carry on in the World, and Satan hath his: You must either be for advancing the Kingdom of Christ against the Devil, or you joyn in Confederacy with the Devil against the Son of God and his Kingdom. I remember what *Jehu* said in another case, but not very different, (when he was to Execute Judgment, by Gods command, on the whole House of *Ahab*,) *Who is on my side?* cried *Jehu*, *Who is on my side?* I may put the like Question this day, or rather beg that you would to your selves, *Which side will you take?* For you cannot be *Newters*. Which side will you take; For Reformation? Or for Profaneness? For suppressing Vice, or for letting it alone? That is, Will you be *for Christ*, or *for the Devil*? You must be Treacherous to your Lord, and unfaithful to your Baptismal Vow, if you do not joyn heartily

heartily against the Interest of the Devil, in so plain and publick a Case as this.

AND among all sorts of Christians, that have written against Persecution, and about the Power of the Magistrate as to Matters of Religion, we find that the greatest Sticklers for the most *unlimited Toleration*, as to different Sentiments about Matters of Faith, and Worship; do yet all agree, that these Instances of Immorality do properly come under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate, as having a mighty Influence upon Publick Societies, being very prejudicial to the Welfare of it. So that no Man can complain of Persecution for his Opinions, when he is punished for such gross Immoralities against the Laws of God and the Land. No *Christians*, no *Protestants*, who differ in lesser Matters as to Faith and Worship, will plead for the Allowance of such Corruption of Manners, and Debauchery of Life, as you endeavour to suppress.

IF it should be said, that I am mistaken here: For all Christians do not agree about *the Morality of the Sabbath*, and therefore it is hard to punish Men for the Profanation of it. *I answer*, that granting some good Men may have given Directions about the Observation of the Lord's Day, that cannot be warranted from the Word of God, as reducing it too much to a wearisome bodily Exercise, yet have we enough to confirm our Opinion and Practice as to *the Lord's Day*, by considering the first Original and Institution of the Sabbath, and the Matter of the *Fourth Commandment*; (And when all the other Nine are granted to be of universal and perpetual Obligation, 'tis hard to conceive, that *one* of the *ten* should concern *only the Jews*;) And considering the Practice of the Christian Church in all Ages, and the Experience of a special Presence and Blessing of God on the Publick Christian Worship on such a Weekly Day of Rest; and that serious Religion was never observed to thrive and flourish, or be long preserved, in any City, Family, or particular Soul, where this was neglected; These, and the like things, are sufficient for our Justification. But you my
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Brethren, that are Members of the *Church of England*, are peculiarly obliged to suppress the Profanation of the Weekly Sabbath; because every Lord's Day, and oft'ner, you beg of God, *to incline your Hearts to keep the Fourth Commandment*, and that the *Fourth*, as well as the other *Nine*, may be *written upon your Hearts*, and obeyed in you Lives. Besides what might be quoted out of the *Homilies*.

3. HAVING mentioned this of the Sabbath, I proceed, to consider you in your Families, and Shops, and private Relations, and so to manifest it to be your *Duty* and *Interest*, on that account to have the Laws put in Execution, and particularly against the Profanation of the Lord's Day. For while your Children and Servants are employed in Civil Business, and Secular Affairs, on the Week-days, they are freed from many Temptations: But if they be not employed in Religious Exercises on the Lord's Day, if they are left to themselves, to do nothing, or to do what they please; to stay at home, or go abroad; to attend the publick Worship, or not attend it, you expose them to such Temptations, as many ways may be Injurious to yourselves, and in the end Destructive to them. There are Few, that come to a miserable shameful Death in this World, but acknowledge this, and date their Wickedness and their Ruine from their neglecting to keep holy the Lord's Day.

DO but Consider how much the Peace and Safety of your Families, the Trade, the Riches and Prosperity of the City, (which consists of particular Families,) is owing to good Laws, and to the Terror of the annexed Punishments; and you will hereby discern your own *Interest* so wrapp'd up in the Publick, as to infer your *Duty* to promote the Administration of Justice. Murders would be more frequently committed, were it not for the Terror of the Law. Robberies and Burglaries would be more common, were it not for the Severity of the Punishment. And that lesser Thefts and Frauds, in buying and selling, are more common, is because the Penalty is small if discovered, and the Means of Prosecution chargeable. There is very much reason to think, that,

that 'tis not *Conscience*, so much as the Dread of Temporal Punishment, that makes you safe in your Houses, and quiet in the Possession of what you enjoy.

AS to the Suppression of Profaneness and Debauchery, let Parents and Masters consider it, that 'tis more than possible, that some of those Offenders, (who might be reclaimed by seasonable Correction, but for want of it go on, and are hardened in Sin;) may be related hereafter to some of your Families, by the Marriage of a Son or Daughter, or other Relation: And so you and yours may smart by the ill Effects of that Wickedness, which Faithfulness and Zeal in your present Undertaking might restrain and prevent.

NEED I mind you of the Routs and Riots, the Quarrels, and Contentions, and Murthers, occasioned by *Drunkenness*; of the Poverty and Ruine of a Multitude of Families, by that, and other expensive Vices: Whereby Men not only undo themselves, but rob those for whom they ought to make Provision. Can you be ignorant of the horrid Confusion in Families, and the sad Train of other ill Consequences, as to Health, and Life, and Honour, and Estate, which is the Fruit of Lewdness and Uncleaness? Are you not sensible of the Advantage to your Families, by Purity, and Chastity, and keeping the Marriage Bed undefiled? and that by *Drunkenness* and Uncleaness Men are prepared for any other Villany they may be tempted to commit?

CAN you be safe, as to your Persons or Estates, good Name, or Life, while, by common and customary Swearing, the Reverence and Awe of an *Oath* is lost, and the Obligation of it forgotten? What Trust or Dependance can there rationally be given to the Testimony of such a one, as a *Witness* or *Juryman*, who daily takes the Name of God in vain in his ordinary Discourse? To this is owing very much the dreadful Guilt of Perjury and Subornation, that is more complained of in this Age, than it may be in any other.

AS to the Business of *Trade*, let me reason with you, Would you not sooner trust a sober honest Man, that hath but half the Estate of a lewd Debauchee? As knowing, in a
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little while the latter may be brought to a Morfel of Bread; and that many have been so, who once fared deliciously every Day; but by their Vices have squandred away great Estates, and been reduced to that Poverty, as to want a Dinner? Not only disabled from paying their Debts, if they had a Mind to it, but knew not how to get Bread. (I say, paying their Debts, *if they had a Mind to it*, because usually they that will not pay their just Debts when able, afterwards would do it, and have it not.) But there is nothing is the undoing of Tradesmen, like the Lusts and Debauchery of their Partners, and Correspondents, their Customers, and their Debtors. How many a worthy Citizen has been bankrupt by other Mens Crimes, and not by his own? which, if they had been suppressed and punished formerly, the Cries, and Tears, and Ruine of many a poor Orphan, and helpless Widow in this City, might have been prevented.

I hope you can feel the Weight and Force of these Things, your own Thoughts may enlarge them. And even such Arguments may have some good Effect, where the Men perswaded by them to do good, may not act out of a good Principle, but only as wise in their Generation: For a covetous Father would be against the Gaming and Prodigality of his Son, without any regard to God, or the publick Good. (As many that had Abby Lands, were against Popery :) But God often uses Vice against Vice, otherwise Kingdoms and Churches must suffer more, or be saved by Miracle.

BUT after all that I have said, there is no Duty so plain (tho' Interest be connected with it,) against which something will not be said, to discourage and hinder the Practice, I therefore come to answer an Objection or two, by which your Hands may be weakened, or others hindered from joining with you in this worthy Design. And,

First, It may be said, 'That 'tis not so very Honourable and Genteel, to inform against other Men for their ill

16 *A Sermon to the Societies, &c.*

'Manners; 'tis more than we need, to be thus busie in other Mens Matters; There is a certain Obloquy and Reproach inseparable from such Work, and by the Generality of the World fastened upon all that will meddle in it, who will not live quietly by their Neighbours, tho' they be not so good as they should be.

I. AS to the Matter of *Reproach*. This is the more necessary to be taken notice of, not only as the most obvious; but because many, who knew not the Methods that you observe, and the Caution and Care you take in your Proceedings, and the very good Effect it hath already had, and how exactly you endeavour to keep to the Laws of God and the Land; many, I say, that knew not this, had not so good Thoughts of your Undertaking at first, as now, and as many others we hope will, upon further Acquaintance with your Design, and not think it a *Reproach* to join with you therein. As to the Persons themselves that are obnoxious to the Law, it would be very great Weakness, to neglect your Duty, and Wound your Conscience, for fear of being ill spoken of by Such, whose good Word could gain you no Credit and Reputation.

YOU have been told, how some of the Princes themselves, of the first Rank and Dignity amongst the *Jews*, did not think it beneath them, to inform against those who transgressed the Law of God, tho' some of their own Rank and Quality were of that Number. *Ezra ix.* There have been many wise Law-givers, who have propounded and promised Rewards, to Encourage Men to give true and faithful Information against Criminals: Especially for such Crimes as greatly tend to the Prejudice of the Publick. As the one hand they had severe Punishments for false Accusers out of Malice, Revenge, &c. so on the other hand Publick Rewards have been promised, and publick Honours have been bestowed, in such Cases of Information, by the *Romans*.

But I hope I need not use such Topicks to You, to venture
your

your Reputation in this Case; when you own your selves *Christians*, and I have minded you of your *Baptism*: You will not think it a Reproach to be true to *that*. You know the Example and Precepts of Christ, of doing good to the Evil, and blessing those that curse you, and praying for those that despitefully use you. I therefore hope, you will not be discouraged, if you have not more Acceptance and Success in the Discharge of your Duty, than God has promised. If you can honour Him, and promote a publick Good; the more you are reviled and scorned upon that account, the more praise-worthy: There will be the more Vertue and Grace to despise your Reputation in that case. 'Let it perish, should you say, if I may but do good; But it is in God's Hand, as much as my Life. And will not He bear me out, if I honestly and sincerely desire to promote his Glory? Am I a Christian, and can I doubt it? And have I not found, as well as others, that I never consult my own Reputation so much, as when I most heartily endeavour to be faithful to God and Conscience? For *they that honour God, shall be honoured*; and they that play the Hypocrite, shall be found out, and *Lightly esteemed*. Thanks be to God, you have many Excellent Persons of all Persuasions to unite with. But if you had not, you should not scruple to be God's Witnesses in the World against *Profaneness*; and to do all the Good you can, whether Others will, or will not, join with you. If this be to be vile, you must resolve to be more vile. But you need not fear your Reputation: For God hath said it, *Isa. 54. 17. Every Tongue that shall rise in Judgment against thee, thou shalt condemn, and this is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord*. When may you apply it, and hope for its Accomplishment, if not in your Case?

DO but Argue with your selves a little. Can it be a Dishonour, to appear for the Blessed God, and your Redeemer, when the very Persons you would restrain and punish, (very few excepted,) inwardly condemn Themselves,

and acquit You ? for they know you are in the Right, and themselves in the Wrong. Most of them know the Bible, and the Christian Religion, and the Laws of God, and that you do but act according to your Duty. And, sooner or later, they will all Justifie your Proceedings. Your Reputation will be cleared, if you hold on ; as the eclipsed Moon, by keeping and continuing her Motion, recovers her Splendor. Your Righteousness will break forth as the Light, to the Shame of all that have thought, or spoken hardly of your Undertaking.

IT cannot be dishonourable for *Gentlemen* of the best Character or Quality, to engage in this Design, if they consider the Nature and Use of the *Grand Juries* in *England*, which are chosen out of the best Families, Men of the best Sence, of the best Estates, and of the best Figure in their Country ; and they come under an Oath, to make Enquiry of all Offences committed within their County, that shall come to their Knowledge : *They are bound to inform the Court against Criminals.* Now if it be reckoned a very Honourable thing to serve as a Grand Jurymen, at the Call of a Magistrate ; it can never be faulty and scandalous, to do this voluntarily at the Call of GOD, for the Service of the publick Interest, and with the Countenance of Authority, as is your Case. And neither Grand Juries, nor Petty Juries, will signifie much, if GOD do not give you Success in your *Worthy Design and Undertaking.*

I would fain have it seriously Considered, whether there be any thing that you unite for, that is *in it self Dishonourable* : And if there be not, your inward Peace, by the Testimony of a good Conscience, that you endeavour to honour and obey GOD, will over-balance the Censures of Men. If you can help to reform, and so save a sinful and polluted City and Nation from Ruine, (and your Example has already begun to influence other Nations, as well as other Parts of this ;) you shall not then have need to be ashamed of it. *Let them be ashamed, that transgress without Cause.*

Cause. Let them be ashamed, that do such things, that can have no other Fruit and Consequence, without Repentance, but *Everlasting Shame*. What little things, to a Man of Conscience, should be a few hard Words, reproachful Epithets, ill Names, dirty Language, to your Face, or behind your Back? If you cannot bear this for doing well, may not Christ be ashamed of you before his Father and his holy Angels? *The Proud have had me greatly in Derision*, says the Psalmist, *yet I have not declined from thy Law*. If Men revile you, and speak all manner of Evil against you, for Christ's sake, for Obedience to him, for advancing his Interest, and seeking his Honour; *Happy are ye, the Spirit of God, and of Glory, will rest upon you*. Was not *Elias* taken for the Troubler of *Israel*; and the Apostles reviled as those that turned the World upside down, and the most unsufferable of Men; and *S. Paul* himself for a pestilent, seditious Fellow? Did not many of the Holy Martyrs die in the Flames, for endeavouring to save Men from the Fire of Hell? But I hope I need not say more to this Objection; your very Profession of Christianity is enough to Answer it.

2. ANOTHER Objection may be started, 'That you would not be served so your selves: It is unjust for one Neighbour to accuse another, one Gentleman, one Tradesman or Acquaintance to accuse another, and bear Witness against him: If you were the faulty Person, you would not be willing to be so dealt with; *You must do to others, as you would be done by, for this is the Law and the Prophets*.

How plausible soever this may appear, I shall shew, *First*, That it does not reach the Case that I am speaking of. *Secondly*, I shall turn it upon you, to enforce that which I design in this Discourse.

1. THIS Passage of our Saviour doth not reach the Case, For it is not a compleat and primary Rule of all Humane Actions towards other Men; nor an absolute unlimited one;

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But is to be considered as a Relief in other Cases, where we are at a loss, for want of a particular Rule. As if a Man fail in the World, and afterwards get an Estate, whether he should not pay the whole, doing as he would be done by. But it must be used only in things first Lawful by some other Rule; otherwise I may be obliged by the Authority of GOD in some other Law, to do that to Others, which it may be I would not be very willing to receive: But the Matter is not left to my Liberty, as being determined already. And there are many Cases, where our own Will and Desire of others treating us, would be a wrong Guide, a very imperfect and defective Rule. Especially if the Matter be determined before, by any particular Divine and Humane Laws. If a Man be indebted to you, you would not think much if you Arrest him, if he will not pay: Whereas, it may be, you would not be very willing he should serve you so. So for a Magistrate, if he offends, it may be he would not care to be punished. But think a little what is *Just*, and *Reasonable*, and fit in this Case: And in such Points only this Rule holds. He that is to inflict the Punishment, is doubtless under less Prejudice, and supposed to be a more Impartial Judge, than the Offender that is to be punished. And if you were in his Case, you would think and act, as he does; and therefore cannot reasonably expect to escape now: For it would be Cruelty to the greater, and far better part of the Society, if such Offences should go unpunished.

2. I shall turn it upon you, to enforce that which I design in this Discourse, from this very Rule, of *doing to Others as you would be done by*. Is there any of you, that is willing to be defrauded, in his Person, Estate, Name, &c. however unwilling to be punished, when guilty? Were any of you a Magistrate? (and many of you may live to be so) Would you not desire the Concurrence, the Countenance and Assistance of your Neighbours and Fellow-Citizens, in the Execution of your Office? Whatever you would

would reasonably desire and approve from Others in that case, you are now to render to them. And as to your Selves too, you will do well to keep this Rule in your Eye, in the pursuit of your great Design. And therefore to Compassionate the offending Persons, charitably to desire and seek their Repentance and Amendment: Not to magnifie or multiply their Faults, without Reason; but to put the fairest Construction upon their Words and Actions: If their Fault will admit of any Plea, Diminution or Excuse, not to reject it, but to make the same Allowance to others, as, in the same Circumstances, you would reasonably desire from any Honest Man.

IN a Word, not to transgress the Bounds of Charity and Mercy, even in the Administration of Justice, because you your selves would desire it in the like Case. And on this Account, unless the Criminals be obstinate and impudent, you will do well to treat them with Meekness, and Gentleness of Speech and Behaviour: For bitter and upbraiding Words, and a morose sour Carriage, will but help to make them Obstinate. And the Faults and Follies of Mankind, as well as their Sufferings in the World, are Objects of Pity. Hard Words, rude and unkind Speeches, will do harm to young Sinners; and Mankind is so made, that they will hardly do good to any Body. However, remember to do as you would be done by. And so I am led to give you some Advice before I was aware, with reference to your Proceedings, which is the *Third Thing* I proposed.

AND that which I have now said, directs me to begin with this Counsel, *First*, That tho' you ought to be impartial, yet you must have Compassion, making a difference between some sorts of Criminals and others. It is the Apostle's Advice, *Jude 22*. Tho' that may relate to the Governours of the Church, yet 'tis very applicable here. As there is a Difference in Crimes, and the Law makes a Difference in Punishment; so there is in Criminals. If it be the
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first or second Fault, it is not all one Case, as with a hardened habituated Sinner. You will easily Apprehend, that a green Wound, and an old Ulcer, are not to be cured by the same Application. A sharp Reproof, a serious Admonition, or a severe Threatning, may do more good on Some, than the severest Punishment on Others, who are past Shame. There are some who fall by Surprize, and not by Deliberation and customary Wickedness; and such ought to be pitied, and restored in the Spirit of Meekness: There is not so much of vicious Habit, and Stubbornness of Will, in such Cases, as of the Frailty of Humane Nature.

2. **HOWEVER**, you must be so far Impartial, notwithstanding this Compassion, as not to spare any Man, because he is of your Party and Perswasion in Matters of Religion: Nor to seek for Crimes and Offences in those of *one Party*, rather than *another*. For such Transgressions of the Law are equally faulty in all. Let Men pretend to what Strictness they will in Matters of positive Institution and Worship, these Immoralities are heinous, and to be punished by the Judges. Your Partiality in this Case, would discover, that you do not hate the Sin, so much, as seek an Advantage against the Party you do not like. And it may give an Occasion to others to raise the old Scandal, That you believe God sees no Sin in his People, and therefore Men should not: And that the Saints cannot Sin, nor Believers do themselves any harm by Sin: And being assured of escaping Eternal Punishment, they ought to be saved from Temporal. This would be the greatest Reproach, on the Profession of Religion that can be.

AND withal take heed, not to prosecute any Man that is Faulty in this Matter, because he is your particular Enemy, or hath disoblged, or injured you. For whatever he suffers in this Case, tho' he never so much deserves it, what you do can never be pleasing to **GOD**, as being from a wrong Principle, nor is it likely to reclaim the Offender.

NEITHER

NEITHER must you neglect Justice, because the Offender is your Friend, or Acquaintance. Not that I would be thought to encourage you to betray Conversation, to be false to your Friend, and if an Offence be Committed only in your Presence, to go presently to a Magistrate, as an Accuser. I should think a faithful, friendly, and sharp Reproof in that case, for the first or second time at least, may be sufficient; if there be hopes of their Repentance. You will find Cases enough, where is no such Confidence arising from Conversation, and no danger of such a Charge of Treachery to be objected against your Proceedings.

3. LET me beseech you to beware how you Tempt others to Sin, on a Supposition that their Character is bad, and their Inclinations naught, and then Accuse them for Complying with the Temptation which you offered, it may be with Artifice and Cunning, and the promise of Secrecy. 'Tis possible there may be Persons of very ill Inclinations, who would have stopped there, if they had not been actually tempted. And there is an unspeakable Hazard, lest the Persons that tempt in order to Conviction, should enter into the Temptation, and fall into the snare of the Devil, and be overcome Themselves. Take heed therefore of catching the Infection you would cure: Lest, by endeavouring to snatch others out of the Fire, they pull you into it. God grant it never may be so.

4. THERE is another thing as to *Impartiality*, wherein your work may be difficult; and that is, that many are guilty of the same Crimes, who are above your reach: Persons of that Quality and Figure, Character and Interest in the World, that you dare not meddle with them. For Drunkenness and Whoredom, Profane Swearing and Cursing, &c. are not the Vices only of Servants, but Masters; not of meaner People only, but of your Equals and Superiors; not of those that wear Liveries, but of the Gentlemen whom they follow. *I Answer,* A little Courage and Resolution, with Wisdom and Prudence, may
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assist you to do your Duty as to this. Doubtless you will not think that you ought to keep the Favour and good Opinion of any such, by conniving at their Faults, when it is in your power to punish. For what is an Offence against the Law of God and the Land in one Man, is so in another. But in some Cases, as matters now are, where it would be likely to do more hurt than good, I think you may forbear: And believe, and hope that the Punishment of meaner Persons, will so far influence the Greater Sort, as to bring them to be more private, and less scandalous in their Crimes. And sometimes the best Rebuke that can be given some great Men and Superiours, is to let them see what is the just and deserved Punishment of their own Faults, by the Punishment of Inferiours, for the same things which they know themselves to be guilty of.

AND thus I have faithfully and plainly told you your Duty, with the principal Objections against it, and with the proper Limitations and Cautions. What remains, is to Exhort and Urge you to the Practice.

SHALL I set before you the Publick Interest of the Kingdom? Or the Kindness to the particular Persons who offend? Or the Honour of our Nation and City? Or the just Expectations of GOD and all the World, after this Publick Peace? Or the Consideration of the Union of so many Worthy Members of the National Church with Protestant Dissenters in this Undertaking? There are many things may be urged under all these Heads, suitable to our present purpose: I will name a few, and so Conclude.

I. THE publick Interest of the Community is maintained by the Execution of good Laws. The Welfare of Society, and its Publick Peace, cannot else be preserved. The very Constitution, by which you enjoy your many Blessings in a private Capacity, must otherwise sink. Couts,
and

and Palsies, and Consumptions, and other Diseases of the Body, are not more certainly destructive to the Health and Life of a particular Person, than the Impunity of Profane and Wicked People to the Peace and Happiness of a State and Nation.

THE Divine Presence and Favour, (which is the Strength and Stability of a People,) cannot otherwise be secured, or his threatned Judgments diverted. Wicked Cities and Societies God will punish in *this World*, and, *as such*, they cannot otherwise be punished at all; tho' particular Persons shall be accountable in *another*. The Crimes you endeavour to punish, you know, are such, for which the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience: For which a flying Roll of Written-Curses is declared to be sent: For which other Lands have been made to mourn. And on the contrary, by executing Judgment for such Offences, we read of Divine Judgments removed, and his Plagues stayed. A few, that would publickly and resolutely own God and Religion, might have saved a City. *If you can find a Man that executeth Judgment, and seeketh Truth, I will pardon Jerusalem*, saith God by one Prophet, Jer. 5. 5. *I sought for a Man, and found none to stand in the Gap, therefore I poured out mine Indignation upon them*, saith another, Ezek. 22. Though at the same time there was a Remnant, it may be, of Seven Thousand unknown Persons, that did secretly fear and worship God in their Hearts: But they did not preserve the Nation from Captivity, and the City from Destruction, as a Few, openly and resolutely owning God and Religion, would have done.

BUT if GOD had not threatened Judgment, such a People would soon undo themselves by their own Vices: Which must necessarily weaken, divide, dishonour, impoverish, and destroy them. Great Numbers of Subjects, that in a time of War, might defend their

Country, are effeminated, debauched, diseased, and made incapable of bearing Arms; fitter for an Hospital, than an Army; to be under a Physician, or Chyrurgeon, rather than a General; who instead of being able to use a Sword or Musket, need a Crutch. By unrestrained, unpunished Vice and Wickedness, the very Genius of a Nation is changed, a generous and brave People dispirited: By Luxury and Debauchery they are softened and dissolved into Cowardize: They lose their Reputation abroad; and have no Strength at home; and are an easie Prey to Foreign Enemies: But, without that, must sink under their own Burden, and in a little time will undo themselves.

II. IT will be Kindness to the Particular Persons, whose Manners are so corrupt as to come under the Lash of the Law: For it is not of Capital Punishments we now speak. *He that sinneth against God, wrongeth his own Soul.* And is it no Kindness to preserve them from wounding, and hurting, and destroying themselves; from deforming the Beauty, darkning the Glory, debasing the Purity, weakning the Strength, disturbing the Peace, undermining the Life and Happiness of their own Souls. 'Tis to hinder them from laying violent Hands on themselves, who like mad Men would thrust a Sword into their own Hearts. And yet how many such Spectacles of Compassion are there, where Vice is not restrained and punished? The Sight of a Wreck at Sea by a Tempest, or the Desolations of a Country by War, (where their Cities have been plundered, and Houses burnt, and dead Carcasses lay exposed in the Field and Streets;) This would affect you with Compassion: But the unrestrained Wickedness of the World, is a worse Sight. To see a Man weltering in his own Blood, and gasping for Breath, after he hath wounded and stabbed himself, is a doleful Sight;
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But the Sinfulness, and Misery of Mankind by Reason of Sin, should much rather move our Compassion.

ARE you not kind to them? to save them from Beggery, from Ignominy, from Sickness, from Death, and from the Wrath of God for ever? Is it not kindness, to save them from languishing, painful Sickness? from Feavers and Dropsies, from Gouts and Cholicks, Consumptions, and worse Distempers, that are the Consequents of their particular Vices, and of a disorderly Life? and withal to save them from an untimely Death by the Sword of Justice?

THIS impossible to tell from what Mischiefs you preserve a Man, who is reclaimed but from that *one Vice* of *Drunkenness*: For who knows what Mischiefs and Destruction he may run into, by running into that Excess; when once the Wine has filled him with more Spirits than he is able to govern? To be sure, you save them from a great deal of Anguish and Trouble of Conscience: For even they that laugh, and sport, and drink away their Fears and Remorse; yet when the Company is broken up, and the Heat of the Wine is over, their gloomy misgiving Thoughts return upon them, and they care not to be alone, or in the dark, for fear of their own guilty Selves.

HOW many of these need to be pitied, especially who have had a *good Education*; to whom it was more difficult to run into an excess of Riot: For they must stifle many more Convictions, and be at a great deal of Pains, to silence the Clamours of Conscience; They must lay aside Consideration and serious Thoughts, forsake the Publick Assemblies for Divine Worship, neglect the Reading of the Bible, avoid the serious Company of those that would reprove them; They must leave off secret Prayer, they must accustom themselves to loose Conversation, and admit Principles of Atheism and Infidelity, before they can adventure to
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commit some great Crimes. And it may be for a good while Conscience will speak louder in their Ears, and the Flames of Hell flash oftener, and more terribly in their Eyes, because of *their Education*. They have much ado to hold on; and if they be sick, or like to die, how ready are they to Despair: Unless they leave the World like stupified Brutes, they are usually in most dreadful Agonies. Is it not kind, to pity 'em, and endeavour to save them from all this, and from Eternal Damnation after all?

A R E you not kind to them, when you consider they cannot be undone for ever by a sinful Course, without being miserable now, and you would fain preserve them from both? Every Week's Experience will confirm the Truth of this. If Men reflect, and consider what they have got by a vicious disorderly Life: *What Fruit* have they had in the Way of Sin? Let them bring in their Account, and let us view the *Sum Total*. What Fruit have they had? but so much Shame and Fear, so much Care and Trouble, so much Disgrace and Disappointment, Dissatisfaction and Disquiet; so many Sorrows and Calamities; an ill Name, an empty Purse, a decayed Fortune, a diseased Body, an accusing Conscience, &c. And all these by such Sins as you would restrain, punish, and prevent. And is it not Kindness, thus to convince them, that if they will perish for ever, they must purchase Eternal Misery by present Punishment; and run the Hazard at least of being Undone in *this World*, that they may be Damned in *the next*?

III. IS not the Honour of the City, and of the Nation, concerned in this? To revive those Vertues which were anciently the Glory of *England*, and to check and reform those Disorders which the Licentiousness of the latter Reigns has introduced? Is Reverence for the Blessed God, his Name, his Word, his Day,

Day, his Institutions; Is Honesty, Truth and Justice, Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity, less a Duty in our Age, than heretofore? Were these things only fit to be admired in former Times, without being practised in ours? 'Tis certainly for the Honour of *London*, (which is one of the most considerable Cities in the World on other Accounts,) that base Assassinations, Murders, and Robberies, are not so common every Day and Night, here, as in many Cities of *Spain* and *Italy*: That a Man may walk safely, upon a lawful Occasion, at any time of the Night, from one end of the City to the other, with out hazard of his Life by Pistol or Stiletto. Would it not be a greater Honour to this City, (and the Protestant Religion professed here,) to be able to walk up and down, and not meet a Drunkard reeling in the Streets, or hear the GOD of Heaven blasphemed, or a prophane Oath sworn in the Places of publick Concourse? not to hear Men curse and swear, and pray to GOD to damn them? (which is, and should be the Business of their Lives to escape and prevent.) On which account also common Conversation, and publick Converse is uneasy to a Serious Christian: For the Company of many witty and ingenious Persons must be declin'd, and avoided by a Man of Conscience, by Reason of their Oaths and Curses, and impious Language, which otherwise would be both pleasing and profitable. However, If we cannot go so far in such a Reformation, as to hope to live to see all this; let us do *what we can*, and beg that the next Generation may carry it further.

IV. SHALL I urge you to these joint Endeavours for suppressing Profaneness, from the Seasonableness of them, after the Publick Peace which GOD hath mercifully given us? Many Penal Laws, in a time of

of War, are more faintly executed, because the Government may stand in need of the Assistance of the Bad, as well as the Good: But when the Sword of War abroad is sheathed, that of Civil Justice should be drawn against *Profaneness*, because the Government has occasion only for the Service of *Good Men* in a time of *Peace*: And hath not so much other Business to divert them from executing the Laws. So that not to punish Vice in a time of Peace, will be a greater Reflection on the Government, than if the War had continued. And alas, how little Security can we have of the Continuance of Peace, or of any of the Blessings of it, without Reformation? *Is it Peace, Jehu?* Is there, can there be a lasting well-grounded Peace, while Whoredoms and Adulteries, Perjuries and Blasphemies, profane Oaths, and Curses, and other Abominations, *unpunished*, are so many?

Lastly, Consider, These are Things that *we All Agree in*. The visible Countenance of so many worthy Persons, of different Perswasions in lesser Things, thus to abet the Cause of Religion, and to discourage Profaneness, is a Great Thing. It may help to bring Sobriety and Serious Godliness into request. Whereas if good Men be timorous and bashful, if they be afraid, or ashamed to take the Part of Religion, (tho' the Laws of *G O D* are seconded by those of the Nation;) the Profligate and Profane will be more hardened, more numerous and insolent. For there is hardly any thing does more embolden Men in Sin, than to see Others commit the like with Impunity. And we may justly apprehend, that the spreading of Debauchery in City and Country, is very much owing to this! That Good Men, who are inwardly Friends to Religion, stand *Neuters*, and will not concern themselves to appear against Profaneness, and help to stem the Tide.

'Tis

'Tis in this Case, as one says of a *Plague*, If the Sound and Healthy will withdraw themselves in a time of Infection, and do nothing to stop the Pestilence; if only the Sick and Infected do walk abroad, and appear in publick; how unavoidably must the Contagion spread, and the Plague reign, even to Desolation, in such a place?

I AM not without hope, that this laudable and Christian Undertaking will promote a better Understanding between the Protestants of the National Church, and Those who in some things dissent from it. As far as we have attained, let us agree to mind the same thing. And to suppress Immorality and Profaneness, I am sure, is one of those things, wherein we *ought*, and *may*, and *do* Agree. And by more familiar Acquaintance with one another, you may find so many Persons, of both sorts, worthy of your Esteem and Love, as will take off many Prejudices, destroy Bitterness and Rancor, and cure that Evil speaking and Detraction, which hath been complained of on all sides; It may tend to heal that Moroseness, and Reservedness, and Distrust of one another, which has kept us at such a Distance: And let us see, that there was no sufficient reason for such an Estrangement. I promise my self, that Dissenters will be so wise and charitable, as to be of *Luther's* mind; When so much was done at *Marpurg*, towards an Agreement between him and the *Helvetians*, he said on that Occasion, that he would not allow that Praise to the other Party, to be more desirous of Peace and Concord than he. There is the more ground to hope for this, in the present Age, because we agree in the *Mystery of GOD*, even of the *Father*, and the *Lord JESUS CHRIST*, I mean in the Doctrinal Articles of *The Church of England*; and thereupon we have sufficient ground, that our *Hearts be knit together in Love*, as the Apostle speaks, *a Colla*

It is high time, *My Brethren*, to lay aside our paltry Quarrels, and Contentions with one another, and seek the Common Good; and mutually to make Allowance for the different Complexions of Mens Minds, and their different degrees of Light, for the Variety of their Tempers and Educations, for different Growths, and Measures, and Attainments in Christianity, in order to mutual Forbearance of one another in Love. For it can never be denied, that, amongst Those of different Perswasions among Christians, there may be, and is, the same desire and diligence in searching after Truth, the same Love to GOD and Devotedness to him, and desire to please him, the same Integrity and Purity of Intention, the same Holiness of Heart and Life, which is accepted of God. And shall any of us be so disingenuous and uncharitable, as to think none can get to Heaven, but Christians just of our size, form, and way? Or shall I be so peevish and absurd, as to be angry with another Man, because he is not of my Opinion; when he hath every whit as much Reason, (that is, none at all,) to be angry with me for not being of his? The want of considering these things, and thereupon holding the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, hath more wounded Religion, and hindred the Progress of it, and been more prejudicial to its National Interest, than all the Opposition of Infidels and Hereticks, that have openly attacked the Reformed Doctrine. If all Good Men, amongst Protestants, would resolve to love one another, and bear with one another in their lesser Differences; you would quickly see that Truth would more prevail, and Holiness with it. For unfeigned Love to all Men, and a special Love to good Men, according to their several degrees of Worth and Goodness; is so agreeable to Reason, to the Social Nature, and common Interest of Mankind, and to the Rule and Pattern of our Blessed Saviour; that it must needs not only be
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generally approv'd, but have a mighty Influence to make the World better, and to recover the Beauty and Glory, of the Christian Reformed Religion in these Nations.

IT may therefore humble and shame us, to think we have been so little able to bear with one another in our lesser Differences; when we take a View of the miserable Condition of the World, and of the Christian Churches, in other Parts of the Earth. Hath not Paganism and Mahometanism over-run a great part, which was once a Christian, but hath now lost the very Name? And is not a great part of Christendom over-run with Popish Tyranny and Superstition, and thereby hath little left of Christianity, but the Name? Is there any part of God's Earth, where Christian Religion doth flourish, more than in *England, Scotland and Ireland*? And shall we not at last be so wise and happy, as to know the Things that belong to our common Interest? Are we not Members of the same Mystical Body, and Servants of the same Lord, Professors of the same Faith, Partakers of the same Hope, and Heirs of the same Promise of Eternal Life, by *Jesus Christ*? And besides this, united by a National Interest, at this Day, to hold together against the common Enemies of our Christian Faith on the one hand, and the common Enemies of our Country, and Civil Liberties on the other?

To Conclude, Let me beseech and intreat you, from all that has been said, to go on with Courage, under the Banner of *Christ*, and with the Prayers of all good Men: Continue in the Love of GOD, and Zeal for his Glory, in Love and Loyalty to the King's Majesty, and in Peace and Concord one with another. Let us join with united Hearts for the Publick Good; and, forgetting all that is past, resolve to look forward. Fear not to displease Men, if you may but honour God. Be as diligent to check and restrain Vice, as others
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are to spread it ; as knowing how much better a Master you serve, and how much better Work it is, to endeavour to save the Church and State, the Souls and Bodies of Men, than to be employed in hurting and destroying them. And be sure begin at home, at your own Souls, and Lives, and then as to your Families, and Relations of several sorts in this City. And on that account, where you have a Vote, omit not your Duty in the Choice of good Magistrates ; as knowing *where the Righteous bear Rule, the People rejoice.* They who are negligent in this, and other Instances of Publick Service, which their Place and Station in this City call them to, they betray their Country, are unfaithful to their Trust, and shall answer to God for their omisive Treachery.

YOU have begun well, remember the Reward of being faithful. Let not your Hearts fail ; for *he that follows after Righteousness and Mercy, he shall find Life, Righteousness and Honour.* And tho' you should fail of the desired Success of your Endeavours, (which you have no Reason to think, by the excellent Service that has been done already,) so as to lose your Labour and your Cost ; you will not lose your Charity and your Zeal : For GOD will Accept you. To his gracious Providence, Promise, and Spirit, I commend you, for your Assistance, Encouragement, and Reward.

To the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be Everlasting Glory. Amen.

ERRATA.

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